

# Hele's School

*A great place to learn. A great place to grow.*



Friday, 27 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly, I hope that this letter finds you safe, well and taking full notice for the government guidance on social distancing and self-isolation where appropriate.

As we approach the end of the first week of Edu Care for essential workers or Distance Learning for the majority of our School community, I thought it pertinent to check in with our families and share some updates - but most importantly to say that you're doing a great job under incredibly difficult circumstances, so hang on in there and continue to help your child/children create regular routines and study habits.

**Communications:** Over the weeks/months ahead, there will be some key information for all families, and some for specific groups. In order to keep communications effective and efficient, ALL KEY INFORMATION will be notified through the Principal's weekly updates so that it is in one place. You will be alerted to a new communication through our In Touch emailing system, as well as through the Hele's School website and social media. These updates will be published on the School website. Please skim over anything that is not directly relevant to your circumstances.

**Edu Care Provision:** This week we have provided ESSENTIAL childcare for any student who is a child of a CRITICAL key worker. Thank you to parents and carers who have ensured that this has been for a **very small number** meaning that we can limit the amount of staff needed to offer supervision. This helps to keep more people safe. Please can I reiterate the Government advice, which is that the safest place for ALL children at this time is at home and you should only send your child to the Edu Care hub if there are NO OTHER CHILDCARE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU and for the MINIMUM possible time. Your child is much more protected at home than being in School at this time.

We will continue to provide ESSENTIAL Edu Care throughout the Easter holidays, and I am grateful to teaching and support staff who have been so giving of their time and support in volunteering to help staff this provision.

**ClassCharts:** Thank you for all of the comments about how ClassCharts is operating. We always welcome feedback so please keep letting us know how it is going at your end. Mr Fonseca, Assistant Principal, has sent an online survey to a number for students directly via ClassCharts to sample their experience of online work set so that we can refine provision further post-Easter to maintain momentum and interest.

Please be reminded that it is not our policy to set homework through the holidays. We wholeheartedly believe that children, staff (and parents/carers!) deserve some down time and an opportunity to learn beyond the traditional academic curriculum. That said, these are exceptional times we are operating in and it is recognised that students may indeed welcome the structure provided by work set via ClassCharts in the absence of being able to get out of the house and do other things.

We have therefore shared on our School website some generic tasks and ideas, complete with up-to-date web links, in the form of a super-curriculum log book, and we are hopeful that these OPTIONAL tasks will inspire children and parents alike! We will also using the super-curriculum tasks as part of the Easter Edu Care provision so that students can pick activities that interest them.

Should you want to keep to a routine throughout the Easter holiday, then you may find the timetable below helpful in keeping some structure to the days. Overleaf is the daily schedule that we will be following for the Easter Edu Care provision:

Time	Activity
9.00 - 9.30am	Fitness Time (Jo Wicks is keeping the nation active and continues to be recommended)
9.30 - 10.00am	Games/puzzles
10.00-10.30am	Arts/Crafts
10.30-11.00am	Super-curriculum (using booklet on the school website)
11.00 - 11.30am	Break time
11.30 - 1.30pm	Film
1.30 - 2.00pm	Lunch time
2.00-3.00pm	Reading

**Note that compulsory ClassCharts work will resume again on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April.**

**Information about year 11 and 13 examination outcomes:** We understand that students may be disappointed that they have not been able to sit their exams but please be assured that we will continue to support all students to access the next step of their education journey.

The examinations regulator (Ofqual) will develop and set out a process that will provide students with a calculated grade which reflects their performance as fairly as possible and it is anticipated that these grades will be released by the end of July 2020. School leaders have been told to expect clarification from the Secretary of State about this year's qualification grading next week. In the meantime, please do not contact subject teachers to request information about grades. As soon as any information comes through, we will review the instructions and ensure Hele's students and their families are informed of the way forward. Until then, the government has published some questions and answers that you may find helpful: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>.

The priority for all of us now is to ensure students can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including going into employment and training, starting Sixth Form, College or University courses, or an Apprenticeship in the autumn.

In the interim, it is vital that students continue to prepare themselves for the next stage of learning so that they do not find themselves behind their peers when they begin their new course. This could be that they continue to revisit learning from GCSE courses or that they undertake some 'pre-learning' for the courses they have applied to start next academic year.

For those Year 11s planning on accessing Post-16 courses at Hele's, our priority is to make sure that all students are on the right study programme in September. Later next term, departments will plan some bridging work for all A level and BTEC subjects starting in September 2020, the intention being to help prepare students for their Post-16 courses.

For Year 13 students, the following link will take you to a large number of free online courses released by Universities across the world. There just may be something of interest to keep the 'grey matter' challenged during the coming weeks: <https://www.classcentral.com/report/new-courses-october-2018/>

**Year 8 Options:** Thank you for submitting your child's Year 8 Options Choices earlier than anticipated due to the abrupt national school closure directive. Around three-quarters of the year group have submitted choices so far. Once we have received the overwhelming majority of forms back, then we will continue with our usual internal procedures for processing Option Choices and will make contact later next term if we feel we need to discuss your child's choices with you. If you have not yet submitted your form, you will be contacted via email and asked to send choices through to Mrs Ayres, Assistant Principal, at [ayres@heles.plymouth.sch.uk](mailto:ayres@heles.plymouth.sch.uk). Your support in submitting choices **urgently** is much appreciated.

**Family Wellbeing:** Following the latest Government announcement on social distancing, it is even more important than usual that we consider not only our physical health but also our mental health. Strengthening Minds has sent out a free 'Staying at Home in Style' guide for students of all ages and their and families, with some excellent tips, advice and ideas within – it's well worth a look. This can be found at:

[https://f416d0a2-db80-48ab-8828-48a3480497ad.filesusr.com/ugd/35ee33\\_2d6a125a358b43df9d8eb58d0c45078c.pdf](https://f416d0a2-db80-48ab-8828-48a3480497ad.filesusr.com/ugd/35ee33_2d6a125a358b43df9d8eb58d0c45078c.pdf)

On the Hele's website, you will also find a useful reference document published by the Educational Psychology Service, Plymouth City Council. Within this guide, there is lots of useful information about ways to maintain a healthy mindset and some pragmatic advice, with practical examples of ways to manage 'home school'. There are also many links to services which can provide additional help.

Our biggest piece of advice would be to stay calm, measured and encouraging. You may not get every single piece of work on ClassCharts completed, but your commitment to try to support your child in doing so is what matters. We will ensure that we interleave learning and identify gaps upon our return to School, so do not worry unduly. *Be kind to yourself; you are undoubtedly doing a great job!*

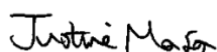
**Scam emails/phishing:** Please be particularly vigilant to the fact that there are reports nationally that scam emails are being sent to parents asking them for bank details if they have children who qualify for Free School Meals. A reminder that Hele's WILL NOT ask for any private information via email, such as bank details or passwords. DO NOT click on any links in emails if you're not sure they are genuine.

Please see this government link for further helpful information: <https://www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-emails-websites-phishing/>

Thank you for your patience and continued positivity in support of Hele's School during these challenging times. Please keep safe and continue to follow the guidance from the Government: Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.

We will be in touch regularly with updates, advice and support.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**

**Principal: Justine Mason**

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